



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Inmate Grievance Office

115 SADBROOK LANE • SUITE 200 • SADBROOK STATION • PIKESVILLE, MARYLAND 21208-3878
(410) 585-3840 • FAX (410) 318-6015 • V/TTY USERS (800) 735-2258 • www.dpsscs.state.md.us

STATE OF MARYLAND

ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL S. STEELE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ANN SAAR
SECRETARY

G. LAWRENCE FRANKLIN
DEPUTY SECRETARY

MARY L. LIVERS, Ph.D.
DEPUTY SECRETARY

MARVIN N. ROBBINS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 26, 2004

The Honorable Joan Cadden, Chair
Subcommittee on Public Safety and Administration
Lowe House Office Building - Room 213
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Re: Inmate Grievance Office - Fiscal Year Budget 2005
Response to Issue Raised in Budget Analysis

Dear Delegate Cadden:

Having discussed what can only be described as the agency's successes in recent years, the Analyst has observed that although the number of grievances has decreased from its reported high in 1998, there was a 31.9% increase in the number of grievances filed from Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2003. In that regard, the Analyst reported that:

The office should be prepared to discuss the changes in the number of grievances received and carried over and the operational implications.

The projected increase in the number of grievances carried over into Fiscal Year 2004 and Fiscal Year 2005 is inextricably related to the number of grievances filed; the time required to conduct the preliminary reviews of those grievances; and the number of cases reviewed that will require hearings (i.e., all those grievances that are not administratively dismissed). It is further predicated on the fact that the agency had one process-critical position that was vacant for a significant period of time (but which has been filled as of January 7, 2004). Some of the projections for Fiscal Year 2004 have not yet been realized, and that may--in the end--yield a positive result: fewer grievances filed may result in fewer cases carried over into the next year. Our projections, however, are subject to significant variances on a month-to-month--even a day-to-day--basis. A single event, occurrence or procedural change within the Division of Correction or Patuxent Institution has the potential of generating numerous grievances filed with the Office. Likewise, and conversely, a prison environment that is able to address and resolve complaints at the institutional level would be expected to yield fewer grievances requiring review by the Office. If that were the case, then more time would be available to devote to the processing of the cases that have been filed, and fewer cases would be carried forward into the next year. At present, the Office appears to be reaping the benefit of having had fewer grievances filed. Consequently, the number of

"Active" cases (which at the end of the Fiscal Year will be reported as the "Grievances Carried Over") although higher now than at the same time last year, is less than currently projected for the end of this Fiscal Year. With four months still remaining in the current Fiscal Year, however, it is important to note that the projections are still subject to significant variances, as they are extremely sensitive to external forces. Multiple grievances filed by a single inmate, for example, or grievances filed by many inmates about a single event, can dramatically affect our statistical reports and influence future projections.

The Inmate Grievance Office has continued to take steps to improve operational efficiencies, and has done so in partnership with the Office of Administrative Hearings, in particular; and with the cooperation of other entities within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

As Executive Director, I will continue to seek ways and means to improve efficiency and productivity in the workplace, and look forward to reporting even more positive results next year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this response to you. I will be happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin N. Robbins
Executive Director

cc: Mary Ann Saar, Secretary, DPSCS
G. Lawrence Franklin, Deputy Secretary for Administration, DPSCS
Mary L. Livers, Ph.D., Deputy Secretary for Operations, DPSCS
Rhea Harris, Director of Legislative Affairs, DPSCS
Diane Lucas, Budget Analyst, Division of Budget Analysis, DBM
Susan Dooley, Director of Financial Services, DPSCS
William Honablew, DLS Analyst



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MARVIN N. ROBBINS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 1, 2004

The Honorable James E. DeGrange, Sr., Chair
Public Safety, Transportation and Environment Subcommittee
James Senate Office Building - Room 120
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Re: Inmate Grievance Office - Fiscal Year Budget 2005
Response to Issue Raised in Budget Analysis

Dear Senator DeGrange:

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